REMARKS

The claims have been amended in order to eliminate multiple dependent claims and claims improperly depending from multiple dependent claims, and to otherwise conform the claims to U.S. practice.   Care has been taken to ensure that no new matter is added to the text.

Entry and favorable consideration prior to consideration are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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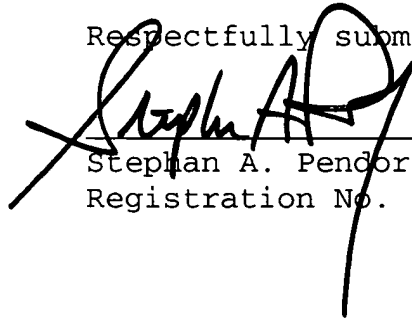
Date: **March 1, 2004**

U.S. Application No.: NEW
PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT   Attorney Docket: 3926.070

EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

"EXPRESS MAIL" MAILING LABEL NUMBER: **EV392067891US**

DATE OF DEPOSIT: **March 1, 2004**

    I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Preliminary Amendment and a stamped receipt post card are being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. §1.10 on the date indicated and is addressed: **ATTN: Mail Stop PATENT APPLICATION, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

    The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required at any time during the prosecution of this application without specific authorization, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 16-0877.

_____
Bonnie L. Horst

NEW ABSTRACT

During welding of higher stiffness steels there is significant tendency towards hardening in the area of the weld seam, which introduces a loss in ductility and thus strongly reduces the durability and quality of the construction components. Techniques for improving the seam quality by an inductive pre- or post-warming of the weld seam have already been proposed, but require elaborate equipment and are not flexible with respect to the seam geometry. According to the invention, the welding and warming are carried out by a single laser beam with a substantially constant output and focusing, however with varying rates of advance.